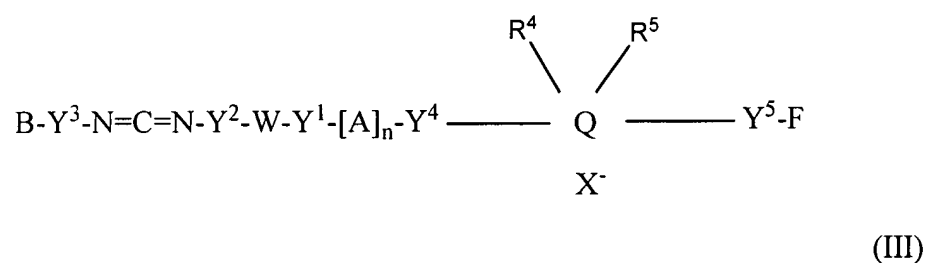


# AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently amended) A method for detecting a nucleic acid ~~by hybridization~~ utilizing which comprises hybridizing a nucleic acid labeled with a labeling substance, wherein the labeling substance is a fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound having at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom, which is represented by the following general formula (III):



wherein,

X represents a halogen atom or a sulfonic acid group;

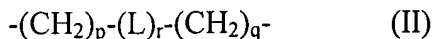
A represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of -CH<sub>2</sub>-, -NHCO-, -CONH-, -O-, -S-, -NR<sup>1</sup>- wherein R<sup>1</sup> represents a linear, cyclic or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, -NR<sup>2</sup>R<sup>3</sup>- wherein R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, provided that when one of R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may have a substituent, or R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> may be bonded to each other to form as a whole a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group which may contain an oxygen atom, -COO-, -OCO-, -NH<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>2</sub>-, -NHC(S)NH-, and -SO<sub>2</sub>NH-;

n represents 0 or 1;

W represents a direct bond or a quaternary onium group;

$Y^1$ ,  $Y^2$ ,  $Y^3$  and  $Y^4$  each represent a functional group represented by the general formula

(II) :



wherein, L represents a functional group selected from the group consisting of  $-CH_2-$ ,  $-NHCO-$ ,  $-CONH-$ ,  $-O-$ ,  $-S-$ ,  $-NR^1-$ ; p and q each represent an integer of from 0 to 20; and r represents the integers 0 or 1;

B represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group being the same as or different from  $-W-Y^1-[A]_n-Y^4$ ; and

F represents a fluorescent group;

Q represents either a tertiary or quaternary nitrogen atom, or a tertiary or quaternary phosphorus atom;

$R^4$  and  $R^5$  each independently represent a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, provided that when one of  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  is a hydrogen atom, the other represents a linear or branched saturated or unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon group having 1-20 carbon atoms, or a cycloalkyl group, an aryl group or an aralkyl group which may contain a substituent, or  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  may be bonded to each other to form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group or a phosphorus-containing heterocyclic group, which may contain an oxygen atom as  $Q^+R^4R^5-$ ;

$Y^5$  has the same meaning as defined for  $Y^1$ ,  $Y^2$ ,  $Y^3$  and  $Y^4$ ; and

at least one functional group selected from B,  $Y^1$ ,  $Y^2$ ,  $Y^3$ ,  $Y^4$ ,  $Y^5$ , A, W,  $R^4$ ,  $R^5$  and F has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorous atom.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from B,  $Y^1$ ,  $Y^2$ ,  $Y^3$ ,  $Y^4$ , A, and W in the formula (III) and has a least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo

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group, a phosphono group, and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the functional group of the fluorescent group-containing carbodiimide compound is selected from  $Y^5$ ,  $R^4$ ,  $R^5$  and F in the formula (III) and has at least one group selected from a carboxyl group, a sulfo group, a phosphono group and a phospho group which have substitution of an alkali metal, an alkaline earth metal, or a basic group containing a nitrogen or phosphorus atom.